Amendments to the Claims

Kindly amend claims 1, 8 & 15, as set forth below. All pending claims are reproduced below, with changes in the amended claims shown by underlining (for added matter), and strikethrough/double brackets (for deleted matter).

1. (Currently Amended) A method of assessing a product development effort comprising:

identifying multiple possible root causes of trouble for a product development effort, the product development effort being undertaken to produce a tangible product;

identifying multiple questions sets for diagnosing the multiple possible root causes of trouble, each question set being a comprehensive set of questions directed to diagnosing a respective root cause of trouble of the multiple possible root causes of trouble and identifying specific project role(s) to provide responses to questions of the question set, the responses from the specific project role(s) facilitating diagnosing the respective root cause of trouble and thus assessing the product development effort to produce the tangible product, wherein different specific project roles are identified to provide responses to questions of different questions sets of the multiple question sets; [[and]]

providing a computer-implemented tool to evaluate answers to the question sets and provide guidance based on scored questions regarding existence of one or more root causes of trouble for the product development effort from the identified multiple possible root causes of trouble, the scored questions being produced by an automated scoring mechanism, the automated scoring mechanism automatically counting the number of responses in required fields of a question set of the multiple question sets and scoring the question set against a total number of required fields in the question set to produce a numeric value which is an ~~automatic~~ indication of the strength of responses for the question set, the strength of responses indication being an ~~automatic~~ indication of the strength of analysis of the respective root cause of trouble and representing the impact of the respective root cause of trouble on the project development effort; and

wherein the computer-implemented tool plots each root cause of trouble of the multiple possible root causes of trouble using the produced numeric values in a graph with a first axis representing strength of responses for the respective root causes of trouble and a second axis representing impact of the respective root causes on the product development effort, the graph facilitating assessing the product development effort by facilitating identifying a possible root cause of trouble of the multiple possible root causes of trouble with a high impact on the product development effort and strong responses in support of the presence of the root cause of trouble.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising evaluating project management processes employed for the product development effort by comparison thereof to identified, standard project management processes, and wherein the computer-implemented tool provides guidance regarding effectiveness of implementation of the project management processes employed for the product development effort.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2, further comprising evaluating project management work product of the product development effort and inputting work product assessment to the computer-implemented tool as further evidence of the existence of the one or more root causes of trouble for the product development effort or the effectiveness of implementation of the project management processes employed for the product development project.

4. (Previously Canceled).

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising identifying in the computer-implemented tool the specific project personnel roles to answer questions of the multiple question sets, wherein the multiple question sets also reside in the computer-implemented tool.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the product development effort comprises one of a software development project or a hardware development project.

7. (Previously Canceled).

8. (Currently Amended) A system for assessing a product development project comprising:

a processor comprising a computer-implemented tool identifying multiple common root causes of trouble for a product development effort undertaken to produce a tangible product and multiple question sets for diagnosing the multiple common root causes of trouble, each question set being a comprehensive set of questions directed to diagnosing a respective root case of trouble of the multiple possible root causes of trouble and identifying specific project role(s) to provide responses to questions of the question set, the responses from the specific product role(s) facilitating diagnosing the respective root cause of trouble and thus assessing the product development effort to produce the tangible product, wherein different specific project roles are identified to provide responses to questions of different questions sets of the multiple question sets, and wherein the computer-implemented tool evaluates answers to the question sets and provides guidance based on scored questions regarding existence of one or more root causes of trouble for the product development effort from the identified multiple common root causes of trouble, the scored questions being produced by an automated scoring mechanism, the automated scoring mechanism automatically counting the number of responses in required fields of a question set of the multiple question sets and scoring the question set against a total number of required fields in the question set to produce a numeric value which is an ~~automatic~~ indication of the strength of responses for the question set, the strength of responses indication being an ~~automatic~~ indication of the strength of analysis of the respective root cause of trouble, and representing the impact of the respective root cause of trouble on the project development effort; and

wherein the computer-implemented tool plots each root cause of trouble of the multiple possible root causes of trouble using the produced numeric values in a graph with a first axis representing strength of responses for the respective root causes of trouble and a second axis representing impact of the respective root causes on the product development effort, the graph facilitating assessing the

product development effort by facilitating identifying a possible root cause of trouble of the multiple possible root causes of trouble with a high impact on the product development effort and strong responses in support of the presence of the root cause of trouble.

9. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 8, wherein the computer-implemented tool further comprises means for evaluating project management processes employed for the product development effort by comparison thereof to identified, standard project management processes, and wherein the computer-implemented tool provides guidance regarding effectiveness of implementation of the project management processes employed for the product development effort.

10. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 9, wherein the computer-implemented tool further comprises means for evaluating project management work product of the product development effort as further evidence of the existence of one or more root causes of trouble for the product development effort or the effectiveness of implementation of the project management processes employed for the product development effort.

11. (Previously Canceled).

12. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 8, wherein the computer-implemented tool further comprises means for identifying the specific project personnel roles to answer questions of the multiple question sets, wherein the multiple question sets also reside within the computer-implemented tool.

13. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 8, wherein the product development effort comprises one of a software development project or a hardware development project.

14. (Previously Canceled).

15. (Currently Amended) At least one program storage device readable by a computer embodying at least one program of instructions executable by the computer to perform, when executing on the computer, a method of assessing a product development effort, the method comprising:

identifying multiple possible root causes of trouble for a product development effort, the product development effort being undertaken to product a tangible product;

identifying multiple question sets for diagnosing the multiple possible root causes of trouble, each question set being a set of comprehensive questions directed to diagnosing a respective root cause of trouble of the multiple possible root causes of trouble and identifying specific project role(s) to provide responses to questions of the question set, the responses from the specific project role(s) facilitating diagnosing the respective root cause of trouble and thus assessing the product development effort to produce the tangible product, wherein different specific project roles are identified to provide responses to questions of different questions sets of the multiple question sets; [[and]]

evaluating answers to the question sets and providing guidance based on scored questions regarding existence of one or more root causes of trouble for the product development effort from the identified multiple possible root causes of trouble, the scored questions being produced by an automated scoring mechanism, the automated scoring mechanism automatically counting the number of responses in required fields of a question set of the multiple question sets and scoring the question set against a total number of required fields in the question set to produce a numeric value which is an ~~automatic~~ indication of the strength of responses for the question set, the strength of responses indication being an ~~automatic~~ indication of the strength of analysis of the respective root cause of trouble and representing the impact of the respective root cause of trouble on the project development effort; and

wherein the computer-implemented tool plots each root cause of trouble of the multiple possible root causes of trouble using the produced numeric values in a graph with a first axis representing strength of responses for the respective root causes of trouble and a second axis representing impact of the respective root causes on the product development effort, the graph facilitating accessing the product development effort by facilitating identifying a possible root cause of

trouble of the multiple possible root causes of trouble with a high impact on the product development effort and strong responses in support of the presence of the root cause of trouble.

16. (Previously Presented) The at least one program storage device of claim 15, wherein the method further comprises evaluating project management processes employed for the product development effort by comparison thereof to identified, standard project management processes, and providing guidance regarding effectiveness of implementation of the project management processes employed for the product development effort.

17. (Previously Presented) The at least one program storage device of claim 16, wherein the method further comprises evaluating project management work product of the product development effort and providing work product assessment as further evidence of the existence one or more root causes of trouble for the product development effort or the effectiveness of implementation of the project management processes employed for the product development effort.

18. (Previously Canceled).

19. (Previously Canceled).

20. (Previously Presented) The at least one program storage device of claim 15, wherein the product development effort comprises a software development project or a hardware development project.

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